

INSPECTION REPORT

WHEATLEY NURSERY SCHOOL

Oxford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 122983

Headteacher: Mrs S Withey

Lead inspector: Mrs V Farrow

Dates of inspection: 1 – 2 July 2004

Inspection number: 256571

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	2 to 5 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	22
School address:	Littleworth Road Wheatley Oxford Oxfordshire
Postcode:	OX33 1NN
Telephone number:	01865 452725
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs R Burdett
Date of previous inspection:	20 May 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wheatley Nursery School is situated in a rural area on the outskirts of Oxford. The school serves a mixed catchment area that includes private and local authority housing. It provides 26 part-time places for children aged two to five. This includes up to eight places for children with severe learning difficulties from John Watson Special School, which shares the same site and headteacher. Children with special educational needs are considered for admission from the age of two. There are currently twenty-two children on roll, all from white British heritage backgrounds. Of these, four places are taken up by children from John Watson Special School who have statements of special educational need. The needs of these children relate to moderate, severe, profound and multiple learning and speech and communication difficulties. As at the time of the last inspection, places are for mornings only because of other increased provision in the area for young children in the Foundation Stage of learning. There are no children whose first language is not English. Attainment on entry to the nursery school is broadly average for mainstream children and well below average for the children with special needs. Since the time of the last inspection there is a greater number of three year olds and currently there are more higher attaining children on roll than is typical for the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22428	Mrs V Farrow	Lead inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Mathematical development Creative development Special educational needs
10329	Mr B Sampson	Lay inspector	
21020	Mrs T Galvin	Team inspector	Communication, language and literacy Knowledge and understanding of the world Physical development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Wheatley Nursery School makes good provision for children. Learning and teaching are good and as a result children achieve well. Most mainstream children are currently on course to exceed what is expected for children of this age by the end of the reception year. Children with special educational needs make good progress. The school is well led and soundly managed. The curricular provision is good. Parents and children have positive views of the school. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The children achieve well in all six areas of learning.
- There is very good behaviour and children have positive attitudes to learning.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Leadership is good but the school's self-evaluation of its work lacks rigour.
- There is good provision for children with special educational needs.
- There is very good provision for the care of children and for their moral and social development.
- There is good curricular provision and a very good quality outdoor area.
- Day-to-day management and organisation could be more effective in further supporting children's learning.
- Links with parents are good.

There has been good improvement since May 2002 when the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in respect of leadership and management. The key issues identified have all been attended to thoroughly and good support has been given by the local authority. As a result, the leadership, management and governance of the school are much more effective. Suitable systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school have been introduced and policies have been reviewed. This has led to improvements in the quality of learning, teaching and the checking of children's progress, all of which are now good. Planning has been improved to cater for children of different abilities and staff have increased their knowledge of the Foundation Stage including the provision for communication, language and literacy. There is greater awareness of the needs of the higher attaining children but still scope to extend the level of challenge in activities for the most able.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children achieve well and most mainstream children are on course to exceed the goals expected by the end of the reception year. In personal, social and emotional development children make very good progress and progress is good in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical, physical and creative development. Children have a good base of skills in their early literacy and numeracy that prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Children with special educational needs achieve well and sometimes very well in meeting the targets set out in their individual education plans. All children are included very well and are very accepting of each other's differences.

Children develop their personal qualities well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Children have a good understanding of each other's differing needs. They have good attitudes to learning and behave very well. Attendance is very good and has improved since the last inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. There is good teaching in every area of learning which results in children's good achievement. The very good relationships and teamwork ensure that good learning experiences are provided for children. Resources are well used including the outdoor area, which makes a significant contribution to children's learning. Staff constantly review children's

achievements and then target what each child needs to do to improve. They build well on children's self-chosen activities to support learning through the good use of open questions. They do not always sufficiently engage with children for long enough periods so that learning is extended through the good quality play-based activities that are provided.

The curriculum is well planned and enriched by the use of the outdoor area and visits. Very good attention is given to children's welfare in a safe and secure environment. The provision for children's personal development is very good. Links with parents and other settings involved with the work of the nursery are good so that there is a good level of continuity for children. There are soundly developed links with the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, well supported by the nursery co-ordinator, has a clear sense of direction for the school. The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and plays a pivotal role in challenging and supporting senior managers. All statutory requirements are met. The nursery is managed soundly on a day-to-day basis. All members of the staff team are committed to securing improvements to the school and have participated in a wide range of training programmes. There are satisfactory procedures for checking the quality of the school's work but the findings are not always exact and followed through in a sufficiently systematic way. The daily organisation of the school is such that there are some missed opportunities to extend and develop children's learning.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents feel their children like coming to school and are making good progress in their learning. They particularly like the good inclusive atmosphere and the contribution this makes to their children's personal and social development. They are also pleased with the improvements to the outdoor environment. A few parents would like to know more about how they can help their children at home. Some would like to see an extension to the school day through the provision of care facilities. The school has agreed to explore this. Children clearly enjoy coming to nursery and participating in all that is offered.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- More effective self-evaluation and use of the findings.
- More effective day-to-day management and organisation to further support children's learning, in particular for the most able.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning

Mainstream children achieve well from a broadly average start. At the time of the inspection there were more higher attaining children on roll than is typical for the school. There was also a higher number of three year olds compared with the last inspection. Because of the school's good educational provision and the greater proportion of higher attaining children currently on roll, most mainstream children are on course to exceed the nationally agreed goals in the six areas of learning by the end of the reception year. Children with special educational needs enter the school with skills that are well below average. They make good progress and achieve at a similar rate to their classmates but are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals because of the nature of their particular difficulties.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in all areas of learning.
- Children with special educational needs make good progress.
- Children make very good progress in their personal development.
- Staff do not always interact with children for long enough so that their learning is sustained and extended.
- The very good outdoor provision contributes well to children's achievement.

Commentary

1. Children's good achievement is secured as a result of the good quality teaching and good curricular provision. Standards are currently higher than at the time of the last inspection and there has been good improvement. The local authority has worked closely with the school in improving the leadership and management. This has resulted in better quality learning and teaching and good assessment of children's progress. Children's attainment is above average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children with special educational needs benefit greatly from good individual support from all members of staff. The support and guidance for them is based on thorough on-going assessment of their needs. All children benefit from the high number of adults and use of the specialist resources at John Watson Special School. The nursery sessions are organised so that staff successfully build upon children's interests through play-based activities. There are missed opportunities to develop this further through sustained interaction or intervention by adults. This is particularly so for the most able children who could achieve still more through adult-directed activities.
2. Good attention is given by all staff to children's personal, social and emotional development. This area has a particularly high priority in the nursery and forms a firm foundation for all of the children's learning, resulting in very good progress. The good opportunities for children to make choices help them to develop self-confidence and independence quickly. Children are encouraged to become independent in organising activities and taking responsibility for tidying up. They learn to co-operate and appreciate the needs and feelings of others.
3. Children achieve well in communication, language and literacy. This is good improvement from the last inspection when standards were below expectation. Good attention is given to the development of children's speaking and listening skills through all activities in the nursery and in particular during the plenary sessions when children share their learning with the rest of the group. Early reading and writing skills are developed well through imaginative role-play. Children successfully apply their knowledge of sounds in their writing.

4. Achievement is good in mathematical development. Mathematics is promoted well through practical activities indoors and out. Staff use every opportunity to extend children's counting and mathematical language through links with other areas of learning, for example by using number songs, stories and rhymes. Staff have recognised the need to do further work on calculation.
5. Very good outdoor provision and the use of visits underpin children's good achievement in knowledge and understanding of the world. There is a clear focus on developing children's understanding of the natural world through direct first-hand observation. Work on important areas such as festivals helps children to appreciate similarities and differences in cultures and beliefs.
6. Staff make good use of the outdoor area as an integral part of the teaching and extend children's control of fine and larger movements across the whole curriculum. As a result, children develop good control and co-ordination in using both small and large pieces of equipment. They use their physical skills well in other areas of learning, for example when exploring the effects of the sound beam as they steer past on wheeled toys.
7. Children's creative development is well brought on through the wide range of activities that are available to children both indoors and in the outdoor area. Adults provide good role models in stimulating children's imagination and creativity through a variety of role-play situations. This is good improvement since the last inspection when this aspect was under-developed and limited the progress that children made.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children's attitudes to learning are good. Their behaviour and attendance are very good which is an improvement since the last inspection. They are well supported in their personal development. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are keen to come to school and very much enjoy taking part in the activities.
- Very good relationships are central to the school's work.
- The school's positive approach to behaviour works very well.
- Provision for children's moral and social development is very good and good for cultural development.

Commentary

8. As found during the last inspection children enjoy the nursery and show great enthusiasm for the activities provided. Children say they like school. They particularly like working outdoors. They come happily into nursery and settle quickly, sharing the first few moments of the day with their parents and carers. Relationships are very good and all children, including those with special educational needs, develop confidence because of the encouragement they are given by staff to try out new things and express their ideas. In the nursery, learning is fun and children are keen to try out all that is on offer. On occasions they tend to wander between activities. They are not encouraged sufficiently by staff to stay longer so that their learning can be extended though more sustained involvement and interaction. Throughout the nursery behaviour is very good. There have been no exclusions.
9. Staff actively encourage positive attitudes to difference and children are very tolerant of each other. Each child is valued as an individual and staff have successfully established a climate for learning that develops children's self-esteem and confidence. High emphasis is given to children's personal development. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning through a wide range of well-planned activities across all six areas of learning. They

work together very well for their age and are able to work well without adult direction. Most mainstream children are on course to exceed the expected goals in their personal, social and emotional development by the end of the reception year.

10. The provision for children’s moral and social development is well reflected in the very good relationships and behaviour. The nursery provides many opportunities for children to initiate activities, for example at snack time and during role-play. There are many times during the session when they can exercise choice and responsibility and they learn to do this well. Religious festivals are celebrated and this widens children’s understanding of other cultures and beliefs, for example when they taste a variety of different foods as they learn about Eid and Diwali. This helps to raise their awareness of similarities and differences in lifestyles.
11. Attendance, although not statutory, has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good. There has been particular improvement in the level of unauthorised absence. The children’s punctuality is good and the parents have a good understanding of their responsibilities. The school’s attendance procedures are also good. Consequently most sessions commence promptly and this enhances the quality of the children’s learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good and reflects the good overall provision in the nursery.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good which results in good learning. There is good quality assessment of children’s work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good support for children with special educational needs assures their full participation in activities.
- There are good procedures for checking children’s progress.
- Good use is made of resources.
- Adults build well on child-initiated learning.
- There is not enough challenge for the most able children.
- The day-to-day organisation needs to be improved to further support learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 13 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactor y	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	10	3	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lesson

12. Teaching is good overall and children achieve well including those with special educational needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall. The leadership structure has been strengthened within the nursery so that staff have the necessary help and guidance. With the support of specialist staff from the local authority, much emphasis has been given to training and development since the last inspection. As a result nursery staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and this has had a positive impact on children’s learning. There are examples of good teaching in all six areas of learning. All staff are included in planning so that there is a consistency of approach to learning and teaching. Assessment of children’s learning is a

continuous process involving all staff. Staff have key worker roles that include children of all abilities. They make notes about children's achievements as they go about their activities. All staff share this information at the end of the week. They plan which areas will need to be revisited and which can be further developed during the following week. The high ratio of adults to children resulting from the sharing of staff with John Watson School contributes positively to the learning of all children. This is particularly so for those with severe learning difficulties who are highly included in all of the nursery's activities.

13. Staff work very well as a team to provide a wide range of learning experiences for all children both indoors and out, some with adult support and others that allow children to explore and investigate independently or with a friend. Good use is made of resources that capture children's imagination well and make learning fun. Staff often draw children's attention to mathematical development, for example through counting games and songs in the ball pool and the number of 'cheerios' at snack time. In developing the communication, language and literacy skills of children with statements of special educational need, resonance boards are used well in providing sensory stimulation and rhythm to the story of 'Rumble in the Jungle'. This gives these children the confidence to participate and learn and raises their self-esteem. Such multi-sensory approaches are also well used in supporting the learning of mainstream children, for example clapping out the rhythm of 'We were chimpanzees, swinging through the trees'. There is good development of children's speaking and listening skills and good opportunities for children to develop writing through role-play. Very good relationships underpin the very good behaviour management. At the end of each session there is a very useful plenary when children review and share what they learn. One child volunteered 'I learned how to hold a caterpillar. They grow into a cocoon and then turn into a butterfly'. Another said 'I know that red is a primary colour. You can't mix red'.
14. At the time of the last inspection purposeful play was not used sufficiently to support learning. Good progress has been made in this respect. Staff are very knowledgeable about the interests of individual children and use this information well to provide imaginative activities that motivate them. They successfully build upon children's own interests through the modelling of activities and good use of open questions so that children make good progress. Planning clearly identifies what it is that children of different abilities are to learn but in some adult-directed activities the focus is narrow and does not always take into account links with other areas of learning or build in sufficient challenge for the most able children. Children learn at a good rate because of the well-informed intervention by adults in their play. However, if the children's interest shifts to another activity, staff appear reluctant to try to maintain it so that children's learning is extended through sustained concentration and perseverance.
15. During each session in the nursery there are two adult-directed activities. One takes place at the end of the morning when children are gathered together according to their ability. The timing of this session does not allow for children to follow through the content throughout the morning and one child appropriately commented 'I'm very tired'. These small group sessions usually take place with children seated on the carpet. As a result in one mathematics session focussing on calculation with the higher attaining group, children were hindered because they could not see all of the activities and the organisation was such that it was not possible for them to begin to write numerals.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. The very good range of visits outside the nursery and use of outdoor activities enrich the curriculum. There is good accommodation to meet children's needs and resources are of a good range and quality to support the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision for children's personal, social and health education.

- The provision is good for children with special educational needs.
- The curriculum is not always extended enough to sustain children's interest, in particular the most able children.
- Records are not kept of children's experiences each day.
- There is a very wide range of enrichment activities.
- There is a very good quality outdoor area.

Commentary

16. There has been good improvement in the curriculum since the time of the last inspection. Staff have developed a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Stage. The nursery provides a wide range of interesting activities that promote the early learning goals in the six areas of learning and effectively interest children in their learning. Very good use is made of the outside area and visits out to enrich children's learning. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
17. Staff build up very good relationships with the children. Therefore children gain in confidence and learn to trust that their views or concerns are treated sensitively. There is a good emphasis on exercise and establishing healthy eating habits.
18. Staff give high priority to children's personal, social and emotional development. The routines within the nursery result in the good level of responsibility that the children take for their own learning. Communication, language and literacy and mathematical development are given a good amount of time so that overall children's skills are developed well. Staff plan a good range of activities to promote children's speaking and listening skills, such as imaginative play situations and a session towards the end of the morning when children review what they have learned. These benefit all children but especially those with special educational needs.
19. During the middle session of the morning staff follow the children's interests in their teaching more often than they direct the teaching themselves. This often leads to good quality teaching and learning; however, the good quality is not always sustained for a long enough period. Therefore, on these occasions children do not always achieve as well as they could. Also, the curriculum is not always extended sufficiently to cater for the most able children.
20. All children have equal access to the curriculum on the whole. Key staff know what children have experienced over time in all the areas of learning but the nursery does not have a system for staff to record the activities that children undertake during the morning session. Therefore, staff cannot be certain that all children have equal access to the experiences that they provide during the week.
21. At the time of the last inspection children with severe learning difficulties, dual rolled with John Watson School, were largely the responsibility of a designated teacher, supported by a nursery nurse and a learning support assistant based in the nursery school. As part of the revised management arrangements these children are wholly integrated into the nursery and supported by all staff. They also have their own key worker in the same way that applies to all children in the nursery. The good quality provision for children with special educational needs has been maintained since the last inspection. The headteacher and nursery co-ordinator share responsibility for the co-ordination of special educational needs, which is good. There are good links with local special schools. Children make good progress towards achieving the targets jointly set by the school and other agencies involved in supporting them.
22. Staff plan carefully a wide range of visits outside the nursery, for example to a local farm and the fire station. Visitors to the school also help to broaden the curriculum, for example the lollipop lady and a local policeman.
23. Resources are good overall. Staffing levels are high and adults are experienced in meeting children's needs. The specialist staff from John Watson School who work in the nursery are of

benefit to all children. Resources are well organised to make their use easy by children and staff. The accommodation is good overall with a very good quality outdoor area that makes a significant contribution to children's achievements in most areas of learning. Staff plan well a wide range of interesting activities outdoors and make very good use of them to extend and reinforce children's learning.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures for ensuring children's care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Children are very involved in the work of the nursery and high emphasis is placed on seeking their views. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is good. Overall this aspect has improved since the previous inspection and contributes well to children's learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good procedures to ensure that children work and play in a healthy and safe environment.
- Each child has a very good and trusting relationship with adults.
- The school involves children very well through seeking, valuing and acting upon their views.

Commentary

24. The headteacher is the named and trained child protection person. There is also one other trained person available. They have ensured that all staff are well briefed on relevant information. Liaison with social services is appropriately maintained. The school makes good use of the local authority policy and all documentation is kept secure.
25. The headteacher is also the named health and safety representative and ensures that risk assessments are raised for all eventualities. All fire fighting, physical activity resources and portable electrical equipment are date tested. Escape exercises are held at least once a month and escape routes are accessible and clearly marked. Accident and medicine procedures are caring and efficient and all staff are trained in first aid. Good use is made of outside professional help, such as the police who visit the nursery to talk about their role. Health visitors and the school nurse also come in regularly. Food is prepared in hygienic conditions and the school maintains an Internet safety policy, approved of by parents.
26. From children's questionnaires and observations it is clear that every child has at least one person, usually their key worker, to whom they can turn for advice or a word of comfort. The general support and guidance for children throughout the school are good and securely based on the monitoring of children's academic performance. However, the school does not yet have a policy for gifted and talented children. Induction arrangements are good. All interested parents are invited in well beforehand to visit with their child. Parents who require additional information are invited for further visits. When their child finally starts at nursery school, parents are welcome to stay for the first few minutes of the session.
27. The nursery tries very hard to involve the children and listen to their views. Within their story group sessions the staff record all of the children's comments on how things can be improved. The main talking point at present, as several children have suggested, is how can the school make the fixed toy tractor mobile.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and other schools and colleges are good whilst those with the community are satisfactory. These links have been maintained since the previous inspection and contribute well to the success of the children's learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good information is provided to parents.
- Parents contribute well to children's learning.
- The arrangements for shared or linked provision are very good.

Commentary

28. From views at the parents' meeting, returned questionnaires and talking to parents during the inspection, a very high percentage think that this is a good school. In particular they say that their children like school and are treated fairly. They consider behaviour and teaching to be good. Parents are not afraid to approach the school with a question or problem. Inspectors support the positive comments made by parents.
29. The prospectus contains all statutory information relevant to a nursery school. There have been no governors' reports to parents as the school, until now, has not had to manage its own delegated funding. A report is to be written for the meeting in the autumn of 2004. Reports on children's progress are clear and informative. Frequent newsletters, regular open mornings and educational evenings for parents are well appreciated by them. There is easy access to the headteacher, nursery co-ordinator and staff.
30. The school involves parents appropriately, taking note of their views and acting upon them where possible. Questionnaires are put to parents during the course of the year. Currently the school and parents are debating the times at which the nursery starts and finishes. Parents contribute well to children's learning. Several come in and help with reading, swimming and trips out. Some also remain and help at the beginning of the daily sessions to settle children down. Parents are encouraged to borrow books from the nursery library, take them home and help their children with reading. Many take this up. The school has suitable procedures to ensure parental satisfaction and deal with complaints. These very rarely need to go beyond the headteacher.
31. Links with the community are satisfactory with some good features. Children visit the local church for festivals and the rector comes in and talks to the children. Local shops sponsor the Harvest Supper and the fire brigade arranges displays. The children support national charities and the lollipop lady talks on road safety.
32. Links with other schools are good. In particular the shared provision with John Watson School makes a very good contribution to the nursery's inclusive atmosphere. Good links are established with another local special school from which one child attends for a half day each week. The procedures for the transfer of children to the adjoining primary school are caring and efficient. Nursery nurses on training placements and work experience students are regularly welcomed in the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are good. The day-to-day management of the school is satisfactory. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been very good progress since the last inspection.
- The headteacher's good leadership is well supported by the nursery co-ordinator.
- The nursery is very inclusive.
- The school's evaluation of its work is not sufficiently accurate.
- Day-to-day management and organisation of the nursery are not as effective as they could be.
- The governors have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

Commentary

33. There has been very good improvement in leadership and management since the time of the last inspection that has resulted in good improvements to the quality of education and children's achievements. The senior management team has been strengthened. The purposeful leadership of the headteacher, supported very effectively by the local authority, has been pivotal in bringing about the improvement. The headteacher and nursery co-ordinator set the tone for the very good relationships and mutual respect evident between all members of the school. The nursery teachers provide good leadership in all the areas of learning. There is a very strong commitment to ensuring that the nursery is inclusive of all children and this is evident in practice. The learning of all children benefits greatly from the sharing of resources and staff expertise through strong links with the adjoining John Watson School. The headteacher, nursery co-ordinator and staff work well as a team and are enthusiastic and committed to ensuring that the school continues to improve. The good ethos of the nursery is founded on the principle that children work and achieve through play and this is the cornerstone upon which all activities are based.
34. There are good procedures for professional development and for supporting staff who are new to the school. On the other hand, the weekly lesson planning is not managed and organised well enough so that there are sufficient opportunities for staff to sustain children's interest in the different activities. This results in fluctuations in the quality of teaching and learning during the middle session each morning when staff largely follow the direction that children wish to pursue. Teachers' lesson planning is not monitored regularly enough so that any shortcomings can be dealt with promptly to develop further the quality of teaching. The monitoring is also needed in order to check that any initiatives identified in the school development plan are implemented effectively. The headteacher checks and reviews satisfactorily the teaching of all staff and supports them effectively in the development of their expertise. However, teaching observations are not sufficiently focused on children's learning. Therefore, the fluctuations in the quality of teaching and learning are not always identified. The nursery co-ordinator is not yet involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.
35. The work of the school has undergone significant external evaluation by the local authority since the last inspection. The headteacher also carries out evaluations and she uses the information to lead staff and governors in the formation of the school development plan. The plan is a satisfactory document that gives a clear overview of the school's main priorities for improvement. However, it does not always set out precise enough targets for what is to be achieved and how these are to be carried out. Also, subsequent actions to bring about improvements are not always monitored closely enough, for example for the school's current focus on improving the teaching and learning in mathematical development. These shortcomings, together with those in management, mean that the accuracy and therefore quality of the school's evaluation of its work is satisfactory rather than good.
36. In discussion with the governing body it is clear that the headteacher and the local authority representatives have been instrumental in developing governors' knowledge and understanding of their role. The governors have responded very positively and clearly understand their role in supporting and challenging senior staff. The headteacher keeps governors well informed about the school's work, for example about the progress that children make and the school's budget. There is a good partnership between staff and the governing body and individual governors visit the nursery regularly to check and review the curriculum provision. This means that governors have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	101,352
Total expenditure	90,988
Expenditure per pupil	6,999

Balance from previous year	37,288
Balance carried forward to the next	10,364

37. The management of the school's finances is good. The school administrator effectively supports the smooth running of the nursery school each day and the management of its finances. The school has managed its own budget since September 2003 but the local authority has only recently installed a suitable computer system for managing the budget. The headteacher has used the adjoining John Watson School's systems for financial management to compensate for this deficiency and checks regularly and efficiently the nursery school's budget. The school seeks to ensure that the services it receives are provided at the best value. The balance carried forward last year was 37 per cent of the total income, which was very high. This was because the money had been allocated for canopies and large equipment for the outdoor area. Children's learning has benefited greatly from these improvements. Because of the dual roll arrangements with John Watson School the expenditure per child is very high. Consequently, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children make good progress and most mainstream children are on course to exceed the expected levels by the end of the reception year across all six areas of learning. Children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is very good because it permeates throughout every area of learning. Children with special educational needs achieve well through the good support they receive from all staff and from the school's highly inclusive approach. All children benefit from the high ratio of adults. This enables staff to build constructively upon children's self-initiated learning through sensitive interactions, although these are not always sustained for long enough to extend children's learning. Children's progress is monitored well and used on a weekly basis to inform planning. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was at least satisfactory. It is now good. Nursery nurses and teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the teaching programme. The most able children would benefit from greater access to a range of more challenging activities directly supported by staff.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of personal and social skills is integral to all activities.
- Children with special educational needs are supported very well.
- Children achieve well and have good attitudes to their work and play.
- Children are confident and have very good self-esteem.
- Relationships and behaviour are very good.
- Staff show high levels of care and concern for children's well-being.

Commentary

38. Children of different abilities achieve well because this area of learning is central to the school's work. It is successfully given high priority by staff within all areas of learning so that by the time they leave nursery children mix and socialise well and are on line to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children are very sensitive to and accepting of those whose needs may differ from their own. In the outdoor area one child happily used a two-seater wheeled toy to give a ride to another child with profound and multiple special needs. She sensitively rode more slowly so that her friend would be safe. Children share resources well and patiently wait their turn when others need a little longer to work out how tools and equipment should be handled. When children arrive at the start of a session they are full of enthusiasm and keen to learn because they are stimulated by a good range of imaginative activities available to them, both indoors and out. They show good levels of independence as they select which task they are going to do. Children are confident in working out how to complete the mini-obstacle course as they are timed by a friend who counts how long it takes.
39. Teaching is good. Adults provide very good role models and so behaviour and relationships are very good, a factor which plays a significant part in children's learning. Their self-esteem is enhanced by praise and quiet unobtrusive support from staff when needed. Because behaviour is very good, staff are not afraid to use more imaginative teaching methods that contribute significantly to children's enjoyment. In the ball pool for example, children submerged themselves in an excited hush to the song 'Peek-a-boo, where are you?' revealing themselves at a given signal to squeals of delight. Children showed good skills in dressing themselves at the end of the session.

40. The nursery is a secure place where each child is made to feel special and included. Sensitive teaching enables children to understand and have positive attitudes towards difference. Children with severe learning difficulties are fully integrated into all aspects of nursery life. Staff make small modifications to curriculum delivery where necessary to make sure they can join in. These include the use of specialist resources, signing and tapping out of rhythms during singing sessions. Children approach new situations confidently because of the very good relationships they have with staff and the high emphasis given to child-initiated learning. Greater prominence could be given to encouraging children to sustain their interest for longer periods of time, particularly the most able so that they can extend their learning experiences.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well.
- Learning and teaching are good.
- There is good development of speaking and listening.
- The most able children are not always sufficiently challenged.

Commentary

41. The school has made good improvement in the provision since the time of the last inspection. Mainstream children achieve well in communication, language and literacy. This is currently from a slightly higher than average starting point than is typical for the nursery. As a result most mainstream children are on course to exceed the expected goals by the end of the reception year. Children with special educational needs achieve well, and sometimes very well, in relation to their individual education plans. The very good use of specialist staff expertise and resources from the adjoining John Watson School has a positive effect on the achievement of all the children.
42. Staff place a high emphasis on the development of children's communication, language and literacy skills across all of the different areas of learning. They make good ongoing assessments of what children know, understand and can do and they use the information effectively to plan the next step in most children's learning. On the other hand, they do not keep a record of the activities that children have taken part in each morning in order to ensure that children have equal access to the experiences that the school offers.
43. Staff give the children lots of praise and encouragement and question them effectively. This raises children's self-esteem and gives them the confidence and opportunity to take part in discussions. The high ratio of adults to children means that staff teach them in small groups so children talk in detail about their ideas and experiences. Staff successfully reinforce and promote children's knowledge and responsibility for their own learning when they ask children to discuss and review what they have learned. As a result, children develop well their spoken vocabulary and the specific vocabulary for all the areas of learning.
44. Staff encourage children to use their writing skills across all the areas of learning which represents good improvement since the last inspection. This is evident when children choose to write instructions and lists in the imaginative play area that was set out as a pet shop in the outdoor area. Staff teach effectively the sounds of letters so many children use this knowledge well when they spell and write simple words. Staff read a wide variety of good quality books to the children and they organise children into groups according to their ability for story time. Therefore children enjoy books and remember well the details of familiar stories, such as 'Handa's Surprise'. They know the names of exotic fruits, such as mango and avocado pear. On the other hand in some activities that staff direct, they teach only one or two children at a

time and this is not as efficient as it could be. Also staff expectations of what the most able children can do are not always high enough in reading and writing and they do not benefit regularly enough from sufficiently challenging activities that are directed by adults.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well.
- Good use is made of the outdoor environment.
- There is a good range of practical activities.
- Mathematical development permeates across all areas of learning.
- Good assessment procedures have identified the fact that children's understanding of calculation can be improved.

Commentary

45. Teaching is good and this results in good learning so that children are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Routine activities are well used in helping children to understand how the number system works. Each day, for example, staff involve children in counting how many are present and how many children are away. Children become familiar with numbers to ten through counting rhymes and songs, which fully involve those with special educational needs. Good use is made of the outdoor area in developing children's mathematical skills. For example they count how many jumps they can do on the small trampoline and reinforce their colour matching skills during the large parachute game. Children use large dominoes on the grass to make patterns and match numbers. Good use is made of the digital camera to record their achievements. In the large sand pit children develop their understanding of capacity as they use a variety of containers. In the outdoor area one child showed good understanding of time as he used the large sand timer. He knew that it would take five minutes for the sand to fall through when he could have a turn on the bike. This also supported his personal and social development well.
46. Staff create imaginative settings so that children can develop their mathematical vocabulary in meaningful contexts. In making sandwiches for their friends to eat at snack time children kept a tally of how many would like each type of sandwich. Children developed their personal and social skills as they confidently went round the nursery with clipboards to collect this information and matched it to the relevant numeral on the number square. Children developed their physical skills in cutting the sandwiches up so that there were two pieces and then solved the problem of how to make four. They talked about the shapes that were made.
47. Good use is made of on-going assessment information to plan the next steps for learning. These procedures have highlighted the need to increase the opportunities for children to develop their skills in calculation. As a result more emphasis has been given to the combining of numbers. In one session higher attaining pupils were grouped together to focus on the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting. Imaginative use was made of resources to capture children's interest, for example pictures of football boots. Children showed good understanding that taking away three football boots from seven left four but became a little restless as they found it difficult to see. There were missed opportunities to develop children's recording of numerals, for example through the computerised whiteboard or through other resources, and learning was not maximised for the most able.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff successfully promote knowledge and understanding of the world through all the areas of learning.
- There is very good use of the outdoor area and visits out to enrich children's learning.
- The work is not always checked effectively.
- Children have a good knowledge of other cultures and beliefs.

Commentary

48. Children, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in knowledge and understanding of the world. Therefore, by the time these children leave the nursery standards are above expectations for children of their age overall. This is because almost all of the children reach the expected levels for their age and a significant number reach above the expected levels. The very good use of specialist staff expertise and resources from the adjoining John Watson School has a positive effect on the achievement of all the children. The nursery has made good improvement in the provision since the time of the last inspection.
49. Children's learning benefits greatly from the effective way that staff plan the work so that so that it permeates all the areas of learning. Therefore, children develop a good knowledge of place. This was demonstrated well in work related to the book "A' is for Africa' when children compared aspects of life in an African village, such as transport and communication, with life in Wheatley. They learn to explore and observe well creatures and plants when they investigate the mini-beasts and plants in the very good quality outdoor area. Staff encourage the children to make drawings of the creatures they observe and these reflect the good quality of their observations.
50. Staff teach well the basic skills for using computers and programmable toys. Therefore, children have good control of the mouse when they work a variety of computer programs. They learn to input simple instructions to direct a programmable toy. Staff plan carefully a very wide range of visits, for example to a farm and the fire station, as a stimulus for further work. Children effectively learn about a variety of cultures and beliefs. A good range of work is undertaken about festivals, such as Diwali and Eid.
51. The work in children's folders and assessment records, the staff's curriculum planning, and teaching and learning observed across all the areas of learning indicate that there is some good quality teaching and learning in this area of learning during the year. On the other hand, the two sessions seen during the inspection did not rise above satisfactory. In a session when children made dinosaur biscuits, the task of rolling out pre-made pastry and cutting bone shapes was not challenging enough for most children. There was a short period of good quality teaching when three children learned to input simple instructions to direct a programmable toy. However, staff did not monitor children's subsequent work in order to check and extend their knowledge and understanding. As a result of these shortcomings, children's learning was satisfactory rather than good in both sessions.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The resources and equipment are well organised.
- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.
- There is good use of the very good quality outdoor area.
- There are not enough activities directed by staff.

Commentary

52. Children achieve well in physical development. One of the reasons for this is that the teaching is good. Staff plan carefully a wide range of imaginatively organised activities that extend children's physical development and also their learning across the whole curriculum. Therefore, by the time they leave the nursery standards for mainstream children are above expectations for children of their age overall. Children with special educational needs achieve well, and sometimes very well, in relation to their individual education plans and benefit in particular from the good individual support they receive from all staff.
53. Since the time of the last inspection the school has spent a considerable amount of money on improving the outdoor area and equipment and children's learning benefits considerably from this. Also, staff use very effectively the good quality outdoor activities as an integral part of the teaching. Therefore they extend well children's control of fine and larger movements and their learning across the whole curriculum. This was evident when children used the climbing apparatus and wheeled toys, poured water into a variety of containers, or acted out the role of the shopkeeper or customer in the imaginative play area that was set out as a pet shop. As a result, children developed good control and co-ordination when they pushed, pulled, pedalled or steered the wide range of very good quality wheeled toys. They developed a good awareness of space when they used the climbing frame confidently and carefully.
54. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and support staff work successfully together to extend children's learning. Staff use lots of praise and encouragement and this gives children the confidence to join in the activities. For example when children, including those with special educational needs, worked together to control the large parachute they were keen to count to nine, identify the colours in the sections on the parachute, and sing 'Here we go round the mulberry bush'. Both children and adults clearly enjoyed the fun and joined in enthusiastically to all of the different activities.
55. Staff encourage the children to work safely when using equipment and materials outdoors and indoors. Therefore, children learn to use tools such as scissors and pencils, and equipment such as bats and balls, with increasing skill and accuracy. However, during the middle session of the morning staff follow the children's interest in their teaching more often than they direct the teaching themselves. This sometimes leads to good quality teaching and learning; however, the good quality is often not sustained for a long enough period and on these occasions children do not always achieve as well as they could.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well.
- Children have access to a wide range of experiences.
- Provision for creative and imaginative play is good.

Commentary

56. Teaching is good and this results in good learning so that children are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Staff work well as a team to provide a

good range of experiences to support children's creative development. Particularly good use is made of the outdoor environment to plan activities that are inviting to children so that they have good opportunities to exercise their imagination and benefit from creative and expressive opportunities. At the start of the day children enthusiastically choose to create collage pictures using a range of materials, which they cut and glue with confidence, sharing their experiences with parents. Throughout the course of the morning they have access to the 'workshop' area where they can select resources of their own choice. Individual three-dimensional models and paintings displayed in the nursery showed how children had chosen to express their ideas in different ways.

57. Outside, children create large bubbles in the water tray, discussing what they need to do to make them bigger. They experiment with the sound beam and listen to the changes as they steer past on wheeled toys. A member of staff encouraged children to listen carefully to changes of tempo in the music. Good use was made of open-ended questions such as 'What sort of movement can we make to that noise?' When the music slowed children spontaneously moved along the ground to represent the movement of a snake. In response to a drumbeat they jumped up and down, chattering like monkeys. Children with complex special educational needs were immediately attracted to the activity and spontaneously joined the group, responding well to the rhythm of the movement. This part of the overall activity provided children with the chance to sustain and develop their learning, and their achievement during this part of the session was very good. At the end of the morning children and adults gather together inside to sing familiar songs and rhymes and learn new ones linked to the jungle theme. There was clear enjoyment from the children as they sang tunefully together as a group, enthusiastically performing actions to 'Down in the Jungle' and 'Elephants have Wrinkles'. Children with special educational needs eagerly joined in, sensitively supported by staff. The family atmosphere and very good relationships contributed well to children's spiritual development through a sense of belonging and well-being.
58. Opportunities for children to develop their imagination through role-play are well thought out and have good links across other areas of learning. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Adults provide good role models so that children can act out the parts of the shopkeeper in the pet shop as they weigh out the pet food and the customer who needs to know more about pet care. In the 'jungle area' of the nursery garden, staff spontaneously build upon children's self-initiated learning, introducing a story line into their play and supporting children in acting out the theme. The most able children would benefit from more sustained involvement in activities to further extend their learning.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).